Harper's

BAZAAR

THE ART ISSUE

MILEY CYRUS *Is* ALWAYS *the* MOMENT

Fashion's New FRONTIER

An AMERICAN *in* PARIS *Gets Her Due*

THE ART ISSUE

WE OFTEN TALK about what art is and what is considered art. It's a debate that cuts across cultures and traditions, across generations and eras. Some of the most important art wasn't recognized as art in its day. Some of the most celebrated artists—the ones who make up what was once thought of as "the canon"—are now viewed very differently because of who they were and who was excluded. Institutions, like governments and museums, can provide or restrict access to art. In some places, it's because they believe everyone has a right to see and make it; in others, it's because they're fearful of what might happen if they do. Because what we're really talking about is what it means for people to express themselves and create things, to imagine their own potential and possibilities, to offer us a glimpse of what it's like to live in their moments and bodies, to allow us to see and experience it all through their eyes and minds and hearts. The American artist Georgia O'Keeffe once remarked that it takes courage to create your own world. It also takes courage to open up that world and share it with others. This issue looks at art through that frame: through the way we make it, but also through the way we share it and use it to express who we are, where we are, and what we want—and fill the world with not just paintings and sculptures and clothes and songs and novels but inspiration. **HB**

MILEY CYRUS

Photograph by ETHAN JAMES GREEN
Styling by CARLOS NAZARIO

Shearling coat, VALENTINO. *Earring, Cyrus's own.*

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From top, on Cyrus: Dior Haute Couture bodysuit; 800-929-DIOR. Valentino shearling coat, $13,100; similar styles available at 212-772-6969. Earrings, Cyrus's own. From "Rogue Spirit": Claire Wiseman Studio blazer, $2,500; 646-956-0848. McQueen by Seán McGirr shirt, $1,960; alexandermcqueen.com. Miaou capris, $185; miaou.com. Artemas Quibble buckle, $935; artemas-quibble.com. Chloé boots, $1,990; chloe.com. On Barbara Chase-Riboud: Louis Vuitton dress, $5,100; 866-VUITTON.

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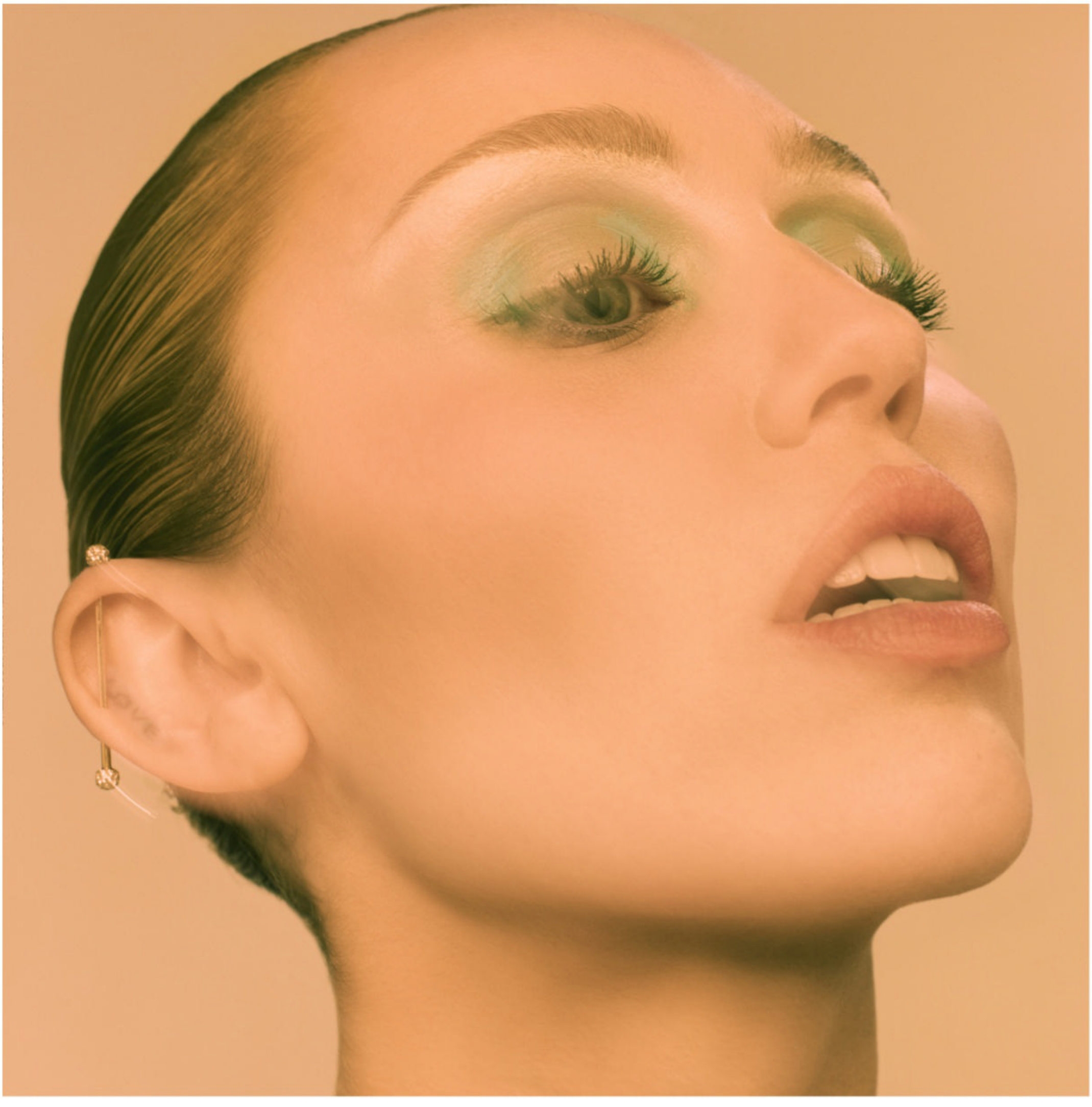
On the full-body cover: Dior Haute Couture bodysuit; 800-929-DIOR. On the close-up cover: Valentino shearling coat, $13,100; similar styles available at 212-772-6969. Earrings, Cyrus's own. To get Cyrus's close-up look, try FetishEyes Mascara ($34), Eye Shadow Quad: Sublime Blooms ($56), Skin Fetish: Sublime Perfection Blurring Under-Eye Powder in Baby Pink ($35), and MatteTrance Lipstick in Divine Rose ($39). All, Pat McGrath Labs.

FROM TOP, CYRUS: ETHAN JAMES GREEN; FASHION EDITOR: CARLOS NAZARIO; HAIR: BOB RECINE; MAKEUP: JAMES KALIARDOS; MANICURE: JIN SOON CHOI. FROM "ROGUE SPIRIT": KRISZTIÁN ÉDER; FASHION EDITOR: TONY IRVINE; MODEL: MARINA MOIOLI; HAIR: TAMÁS TÜZES; MAKEUP: EMI KANEKO; MANICURE: DANIEL TAVAREZ. BARBARA CHASE-RIBOUD: JOSHUA WOODS; FASHION EDITOR: OLA EBITI; MAKEUP: AURORE GIBRIEN

THE ART ISSUE

Vibrational SHIFT



Photographs by ETHAN JAMES GREEN
Styling by CARLOS NAZARIO

Dress and stole, BOTTEGA VENETA.
Pumps, CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN.
Earring (worn throughout), Cyrus's own.

She's a FREE SPIRIT *and an* OLD SOUL, *a Disney Legend and a Grammy winner.* ONE THING MILEY CYRUS *is* NOT INTERESTED *in? Being* PREDICTABLE.

Story by IZZY GRINSPAN

Miley Cyrus is sitting in front of the stone-walled fireplace in her house in Los Angeles, holding up two coffee-table books. One is 2017's *Doll Parts* by Amanda Lepore, the transgender, transgressive, glamour-all-the-time nightlife icon. The other is *Fashion First*, Diane Keaton's photo book dedicated to her quirky borrowed-from-the-boys personal style. Cyrus is wearing a simple black sweater and minimal makeup, her hair slicked back into a braided ponytail, and she's shaking both books with equal urgency. "This," she says emphatically, "is my vibe."

The pairing makes intuitive sense for anyone who has followed Cyrus's career. She's Diane Keaton when she's singing covers in her own backyard in a threadbare T-shirt and striped Beetlejuice jeans, Lepore when she's dancing on the Grammys stage in glittery Bob Mackie with her hair teased to the heavens.

Ever since her days playing Hannah Montana, the Disney teen superstar with a secret normal alter ego, embracing dichotomy has been a big part of her story. She's built her career on being a spontaneous, down-to-earth Nashville girl who speaks her mind and, at the same time, a gleaming avatar of high-glam womanhood. We all contain multitudes, but across her long career, Cyrus has contained more than most people.

In fact, on this multiple-hours-long video chat where we have come together to discuss fame, art, and her new music, Cyrus tells me repeatedly that she embraces her contradictions. "I am specifically unspecific," she says. And yet, when she explains why Diane Keaton and Amanda Lepore resonate, she points to their specificity, their unwavering visions of themselves. "They are so consistent," she says. "And as someone who is very inconsistent, I admire them for being so sure of who they are."

Cyrus has spent a lot of time considering how her favorite artists show up in the world. She bought this house at the age of 18, and after moving to Malibu to live with her now ex-husband, Liam Hemsworth, she started using it as a sort of creative retreat, decorating it with images of the people who most inspire her. "Sitting here now," she tells me, "I can see Joni Mitchell. I see Britney Spears and Vivienne Westwood." The list goes on: Tina Turner, Bianca Jagger, David Bowie, Snoop Dogg, Madonna, Lou Reed, Grace Jones. On her coffee table—she holds up her laptop so I can see—are heaping stacks of art books that she's brought ➤

Stirrup tights (worn as top),
BLOCK. *Briefs,* COMMANDO.
Tights, WOLFORD.

Coat, KHAITE. *Briefs,*
COMMANDO. *Tights,* WOLFORD.
Sandals, MANOLO BLAHNIK.

Swimsuit, CHANEL. *Tights,* WOLFORD. *Creating artfully winged eyeliner is easy with Gucci Beauty Stylo Définition L'Obscur Ink Liner ($41), courtesy of the precise tip and waterproof formula.*

to discuss with me, since this is, after all, *Bazaar*'s Art issue. She's excited to show me a collection of Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs of the female bodybuilder Lisa Lyon: "Her body is an art form."

It's easy to imagine a young Cyrus looking through pictures of her icons, trying on different identities the way we all do when we're figuring out who we want to be. But that's not what's happening today. At 32, Cyrus exudes a confidence and sense of herself that is more often found in those decades older. She's officially a Grammy winner, having earned that marker of industry respect this past February, and she's been spending long hours in the studio working on a new visual album for 2025. As she holds up book after book for the camera, the image she projects is of an artist who approaches her craft with reverence and research. At this point in her career, Cyrus clearly knows who she is on a fundamental level, and her mutability is part of that. The fun comes in carefully constructing whatever persona she wants to inhabit next.

"A lot of celebrities are very concerned with their fixed image, but Miley is a chameleon," says her hairstylist, the sculptor and Warhol pal Bob Recine, who has seen this play out through her hair choices: "Sometimes we do wet and flat hair, and then sometimes we reach the ceiling, like we did for the Grammys. She's a person who loves change, and she understands that fashion is only fashion if it changes."

In a way, this is the benefit of nearly lifelong fame. Unlike so many pop stars, Cyrus has never had to figure out how to introduce herself to her fans, because they've known her since she was a teen. As a result, she's been able to experiment, collecting different versions of Miley Cyrus the way she collects photos of Bianca Jagger and David Bowie and Diane Keaton and Amanda Lepore. When she says she admires specificity, she means it. She has to commit fully to each version of herself. But she's also willing to move on when it's time for new things.

For a while, every story about Cyrus described her as a former Disney star trying to rebel; now, every story has to call her a former wild child who has found peace and stability. Neither of those descriptions is wrong exactly, but both underplay her A-student energy. I've come to our meeting with a Google doc full of detailed notes and questions, but before we can even get started, she shows me her Notes app, where she's been keeping a list of ideas that looks longer than mine. Perhaps this is one of her biggest dichotomies: She has always been famous for "just being Miley," a mid-aughts-era catchphrase and early meme that *Saturday Night Live* memorably referenced to evoke a goofy, tone-deaf impulsiveness. But these days, Cyrus puts a whole lot of thought and consideration into what she's doing and why.

Legend awards don't typically get handed out to people under 70, let alone someone in her early 30s. But this past August, Cyrus was honored as a Disney Legend. Ever the overachiever, she wrote two speeches, a long one and a short one, so that she could choose which one to deliver in the moment. The one she gave referenced an old internet joke about how Disney engineers its stars in a secret lab somewhere. "I definitely wasn't created in a lab," she said. "And if I was, there must have been a bug in the system which caused me to malfunction somewhere between the years of 2013 and '16. Sorry, Mickey!"

Cyrus has long wrestled with her Disney past; if your first association with her isn't Hannah Montana, it's probably the 180 degree turn she took from that image in 2013, when she released the hip-hop–inflected album *Bangerz* and twerked onstage during a VMAs performance that drew accusations of cultural appropriation. Receiving the Disney Legend award seemed like a full-circle moment for Cyrus—a chance to reflect on and maybe even finally close the chapter on a story that has been told about her for a long time, one that is no longer true.

"*The* NASTIEST TIMES *of our* LIFE *do have a* POINT *of* BEAUTY.... *You can't have a* PAINTING *without* CONTRAST."

"Obviously, [being a child star] shaped me into a very different adult than some of my peers or my friends. It is just a really different childhood to have," she tells me now. "For a while, I thought it got in the way of me connecting with people." The night before we speak, she was taking a Chinese medicine quiz, and one of the questions was about whether she felt she could easily form relationships with others. "I don't even know how to really answer that," she says, "because for who I am as a person, yes, I feel like I can connect to people and I feel like I'm a friend to all. But because of how I've grown up, sometimes people make it harder. I can drop my persona really easily, but it's hard for other people to erase that part of you." In other words, she's so famous that other people don't know how to be normal around her.

Ironically, this kind of intimate confession is exactly the sort of thing that makes people feel like they know Cyrus personally. She's not just good at performing the fantasy of stardom; she can also cut through the artifice. In a way, her *Bangerz* era was a gift, because everyone remembers her missteps. We don't like our stars to be engineered in a lab; we want to know they're human too. ➤

"Most of the world knows her already and feels almost comfortable, as if she's an old friend," says music producer Shawn Everett, who is known for his work with indie groups the War on Drugs and Alabama Shakes and who is collaborating with her on her new album. "You kind of feel like you've known her forever, and she gives you the grace to feel that way."

"I want to IMPACT FREQUENCIES *in your* BODY *that make you* VIBRATE *at a* DIFFERENT LEVEL."

Projecting that degree of openness to her fans can be hard to turn off, but Cyrus has taken lessons from her godmother, Dolly Parton. "She lets everyone in and no one in at the same time," Cyrus tells me admiringly. "Everyone feels like they know her, but they're also okay with the fact that they don't see her without makeup, without the full drag." It takes me a minute to realize this is probably what Cyrus herself is doing right now: cracking the door open just enough, but no more.

When Miley Cyrus was 16, her dad decided she needed a car. She'd been making money as a Disney star, so why not let her spend some of it on a Range Rover? But her mother objected. "My mom said that I had to get a Nissan or Toyota just like my other siblings," Cyrus says in her signature rasp. "She was never afraid to take my cell phone away. Even when I paid my own cell-phone bill! I would always go, like, *Mom, that's for kids that don't pay their own cell-phone bill.*" The rasp takes on a more notable Nashville twang. "And she's like, *I don't care. You're not getting your phone.*"

Cyrus's dad, of course, is country star Billy Ray Cyrus, whose crossover hit "Achy Breaky Heart" was inescapable in 1992. Her mother, Tish Cyrus-Purcell, is also her longtime manager, and she has a country legend for a godmother. The Range Rover story captures some of the push-pull of Cyrus's singular childhood: How do you raise a "normal" kid when she can buy her own luxury car? When her dad is recognizable by…everyone? Cyrus grew up on a farm outside of Nashville, then moved to L.A. with her family after being cast in *Hannah Montana*.

"Miley's born into this business," says Recine. "She knows nothing since childhood except being onstage and being a performer and an actor."

Cyrus has learned the hard way how to navigate her fame, a task she acknowledges has only grown more challenging with social media. She was on the list of celebrities who reached out to Chappell Roan after the singer posted several TikToks asking fans to treat her with respect. "I wish people would not give her a hard time," Cyrus says. "It's probably really hard coming into this business with phones and Instagram. That wasn't always a part of my life, and I'm not a part of it now. I don't even have my Instagram password."

Most of her online activity these days consists of her boyfriend, Maxx Morando, sending her memes. The age gap between them isn't enormous—he's 26 and she's 32—but it's enough for him to act as her Gen Z internet interpreter. "He looks at life really differently than I do," she says fondly. "He grew up with a laptop. I had a desktop computer that I shared with my brothers and sisters.…Honestly, he's raised our dog off Reddit. I'm like, *Are you sure we're supposed to be doing this?* And he's like, *On Reddit it says blah, blah, blah.*"

After nearly a decade of breathless headlines about her love life, Cyrus is keeping her current romance relatively private—a sign that she's taken some lessons from the past. She and Morando, a producer and drummer who plays in the band Liily, have been dating for several years now, and when she talks about her relationship with him, it sounds cozy and uncomplicated. "He's very similar to me. We just don't take life too seriously," she says.

Morando has introduced her to all sorts of new music. She says it's because of him that she has "the coolest kid in Brooklyn's music" on her phone. But they're just as likely to sit around listening to "a song that we think is kind of cringe, but we love it," like the early-2000s hit "Drops of Jupiter." They've been working together on the new album too. He produced multiple songs and helped her write "Something Beautiful," which is currently slated to be the title track. For Cyrus, there's no real line between collaborators and loved ones: "I worked with my dad forever. That's how me and my ex-husband met each other. I've always worked with the people that I love. And Maxx just inspires me so much."

THESE DAYS, when she's making new music, Cyrus taps into a kind of cultural synesthesia, pulling from fashion, film, music, and visual art. If in the past she seemed to be leaning into instinct, her recent output has felt much more deliberate.

When Cyrus was working on her 2023 single "Used to Be Young," for example, she brought several Maison Margiela pieces to the studio as inspiration. They came from designer John Galliano's 2023 Co-Ed collection, which was inspired by the concept of "dressing in haste." One of the pieces was a dress that Galliano had given Cyrus as a gift, while another was a ripped-up vintage Mickey Mouse shirt, and a third was a bright-red, "kind of bedazzled, very old-Hollywood bodysuit." She and Everett often work this way: "I can show him a painting or a dress, and I'll tell him to convey those colors or that fabric with sound," she says. ➤

Dress, LUDOVIC DE SAINT SERNIN. *Briefs,* COMMANDO.

This page and opposite: Mini jumpsuit, GUCCI. *Tights,* WOLFORD. *Pumps,* MANOLO BLAHNIK.

The Margiela pieces wound up making appearances in the promotional materials around the song. But you can hear their aesthetic in the music too; it's romantic, melancholic, glitzy like a red sequined bodysuit, and raw like a shredded tee. And while there's obvious symbolism in a former Disney queen singing about her past in a Mickey shirt, the connection between the rush-rush-rush world of Galliano's collection and the looking-back-from-a-place-of-peace world of the song is more nuanced, an Easter egg for real fashionheads.

Cyrus has been in the studio with Everett, recording her new album, for the past six or seven months now, and once again she's been doing her homework when it comes to references. "She'll want it to feel like this specific runway show or something," Everett says. "I love when she talks like that. For me, it opens up a whole world."

One of their current touchstones is Thierry Mugler's groundbreaking 1995 couture show, which featured 300 looks on a cast of decades-spanning legends (Jerry Hall, Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss, Tippi Hedren, Patty Hearst) and included the robot suit that Zendaya wore to promote *Dune: Part Two* in February of 2024. "It still seems pretty cutting-edge, even now," Everett says.

Another reference is the 2018 horror movie *Mandy,* starring Nicolas Cage as a lumberjack hunting down the cult that killed his girlfriend. Cyrus describes it as one of her favorite films of all time (it's why one of her dogs is named is Mandy), and she initially considered remaking it as a musical. "I wanted to play Nicolas Cage," she says. "I love that it's a romance revenge story. Romance and revenge—those are some of the greatest tragedies. I forever and always will be interested in those."

So Cyrus reached out to the director, Panos Cosmatos, who is known for his highly atmospheric approach to horror. While the *Mandy* remake didn't happen, he is now heavily involved in the new album, which is as much visual as it is musical. "It was inspired by Pink Floyd's *The Wall,*" she says, explaining that she saw the surrealist classic-rock film as a teenager with one of her brothers and a good friend. They rented a limo, smoked weed, and wore '70s-style fur coats. "We really leaned in. And so I have this heart-first attachment to it," she says. "My idea was making *The Wall,* but with a better wardrobe and more glamorous and filled with pop culture."

Says Cosmatos, "[The album is] more experimental than anything she's ever done, but in a pop way that I love."

Cyrus describes the vibe as "hypnotizing and glamorous," adding, "It's a concept album that's an attempt to medicate somewhat of a sick culture through music."

This desire to reach her audience at this cellular level, to not just entertain but to heal, is something she returns to multiple times throughout our conversation. "I would like to be a human psychedelic for people," she says. "I don't want anyone trying to be like me or imitate me or even be inspired by me. I want to impact frequencies in your body that make you vibrate at a different level."

"The visual component of this is driving the sound," she goes on. "It was important for me that every song has these healing sound properties. The songs, whether they're about destruction or heartbreak or death, they're presented in a way that is beautiful, because the nastiest times of our life do have a point of beauty. They are the shadow, they are the charcoal, they are the shading. You can't have a painting without highlights and contrast."

That kind of chiaroscuro runs through all of her best music, facilitated by the depth of her voice, which makes even songs about partying feel somehow poignant. She tends to use it to especially devastating ends in ballads like "Used to Be Young," a torch song that comes with the kind of chorus you'd expect from a woman looking back at the end of her life: "You tell me time has done changed me / That's fine, I've had a good run / I know I used to be crazy / That's 'cause I used to be young." It's so emotional, in fact, that Cyrus questions it now.

"ROMANCE *and* REVENGE—*those are some of the greatest* TRAGEDIES. *I* FOREVER *and* ALWAYS *will be* INTERESTED *in* THOSE."

"I actually listened to that song yesterday, and I was asking myself, *Did I really need to put this out?* It was one of those things that maybe now that I'm a bit more private, I would've kept private, but I'm happy to have shared it. It just feels like a song that's so personal that it's hard for people to relate."

Also, Parton was skeptical, Cyrus says. "She goes, 'I don't know if I like that new 'Used to Be Young' song because it's not fair that you're singing about not being young when you're young and beautiful. And here I am—I'm like 80—and I'm like, *That should have been my song!*' "

Admittedly, it would have been a good Dolly Parton song. But as an anthem of self-forgiveness by a pop star who has crammed so much into a mere 32 years, it's pretty great. It's possible that in another 10 or 20 years, once she's established some distance, she'll embrace it again; maybe she'll even find a way to give it new life. After all, if there's one thing to expect with Cyrus, it's that she'll probably change her mind. "I actually live for it," she tells me when I note that she seems very comfortable with contradictions. "It's yin and yang. It's like, you really can't have one without the other. It's heaven and hell; it's dark and light. It's everything." **HB**

Shearling coat, VALENTINO.

HAIR: BOB RECINE FOR NEXXUS; MAKEUP: JAMES KALIARDOS FOR PAT McGRATH LABS; MANICURE: JIN SOON CHOI FOR JINSOON NAIL LACQUER; CREATIVE MOVEMENT DIRECTOR: STEPHEN GALLOWAY; PRODUCTION: TANN SERVICES; SET DESIGN: DYLAN BAILEY. SPECIAL THANKS TO BRADLEY KENNETH, JACOB BIXENMAN, AND HIGHLINE STAGES. FOR MORE SHOPPING INFORMATION, GO TO BAZAAR.COM/CREDITS.